

**The Faction Paradox Protocols,
Volume Two:**

"The Shadow Play"

by
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GRAMS: Background music.

ELIZA: Godfather Morlock used to explain to us about the bog-standard time paradox. You'll have heard this before, I know, but let's just put it on the record. You take a song, or a story, or just an idea that you grew up with, all right? You go back in time, and give your song, or whatever, to someone who was around before it was written. He spreads it through the rest of the world, and before you know it it's everywhere, so you can grow up with it and take it back in time in the first place. The question being, where did the song come from, if nobody actually wrote it? But the thing is... the way Morlock explained things... it goes deeper than that. Because every atom in the universe gets affected by every other atom in the universe, eventually. Every move you make starts ripples that go through the rest of time. So, it doesn't have to be anything as big as a song. If you go back and take a single breath of the air, you make ripples in the world. Ripples that keep on spreading, until that one breath of air helps shape the whole wide world. The world that made you, just so you could go back in time and make it. You see? The paradox is everywhere. Just by stepping back at all, just by being who we are, we're making the present. The way Morlock explained it, every breath we take is impossible. [Pause.]

I just thought I should let you know, that's all. The fact that nothing in this story could possibly have happened.

GRAMS: Music fade.

F/X: Background noise of Lord Ruthven's ship, as close to a TARDIS background noise as we can get away with. In the foreground, we can hear Lolita's baby.

ELIZA [voice-over]: Anyway, let's go back to Lord Ruthven's timeship. You'll see what I mean.

LOLITA [to the baby]: Shh. Shh-shh-shh. It's all right. You're going to grow up to be a big strong time-space event, aren't you? Aren't you?

RUTHVEN [entering, so in the background at first]: It's arranged. Their Parliament's already in session. The Faction wants to go over the small print before they sign the document.

LOLITA: Any arguments?

RUTHVEN: No. As soon as they sign the treaty, we recognize them as one of the major Houses again. They didn't even bother questioning our motives. I think they're starting to trust us.

LOLITA: Don't be stupid. They know we're planning something, and they want to get close enough to find out what it is. I told you, didn't I? Suicide's a way of life for these people. [To the baby.] The question is, what are we going to do about our other little problem? Mmm? Mmm?

RUTHVEN: You said the spirits wouldn't get in the way -

LOLITA [impatient]: Of course they won't get in the way. It's been taken care of.

RUTHVEN: Then what's the problem?

LOLITA: Trust me. Fifteen per cent of my biology's primed to act as a weapons and defence system, I know when somebody's getting ready to bring out the big guns.

RUTHVEN: You think the Faction's got something else? Something we don't know about?

LOLITA: I felt it being activated. When we were outside. Or hadn't you noticed me having a spasm in front of everyone? Time to bring in the troops, whatever it is. Here, hold this while I call the General.

F/X: Baby starts wailing again.

RUTHVEN: I don't want to hold it!

LOLITA: Don't be so wet. It's only a baby.

RUTHVEN: We don't have babies in our House. It's like some kind of... dwarf. It's horrible.

LOLITA: It's the standard design. And they can leak at either end, by the way.

Fade.

F/X: Silence for a while. Then a knock at a door. There's no answer, but after a while the door creaks open anyway.

ELIZA: Justine? [No response.] They said it was okay to come and see you. They said you'd been awake a couple of hours now. [Still no response.] You all right? I mean -

JUSTINE [distantly]: Yes. I'm well, thankyou. Cousin.

ELIZA: Good. That's good. [Awkward pause.] Dark in here, isn't it?

JUSTINE: Cousin Eliza?

ELIZA: Yeah?

JUSTINE: Are the outsiders still here? Lord Ruthven and the others.

ELIZA: Most of the ships have cleared off again. Now they've made their point, they're getting as far away from us as they can. Ruthven's still here, though. He's meeting Morlock in the War Office. Some treaty they're meant to be signing, I'm supposed to on my way there now. God knows why. I just thought... you know. I'd see how you were.

JUSTINE [after a pause]: I believe I've become a siege engine.

ELIZA: A what?

JUSTINE: A siege engine. A machine of war. They told you about my shadow?

ELIZA: They said... something about the Grandfather. One arm.

JUSTINE: The lamp on that desk. Could you light it, please?

ELIZA: Are you sure -

JUSTINE: Please. There are matches by the side of it.

F/X: A match being struck.

ELIZA: They said you're meant to be staying in bed.

JUSTINE: I'm well enough. They've drawn the Dedication over my bed, and made me wear the bone-totems round my neck. The spirits will keep me breathing.

ELIZA: Why aren't I convinced?

JUSTINE: You don't trust the spirits?

ELIZA: I'm not saying that. I'd just like to see them do something a bit more positive every now and then. That's all.

JUSTINE: They have to work invisibly. They'd destroy us, otherwise. Nobody who invokes them survives.

ELIZA: Yeah, I've heard. Convenient, that. What are you doing?

JUSTINE: My shadow. Watch my shadow on the wall.

ELIZA: Listen, Justine... Christ.

JUSTINE: There. You see?

ELIZA: It's true. One arm. My God.

JUSTINE: Look, though. Look at the weapon it's holding.

ELIZA: It's a sword. Wait a minute. That was the Grandfather's weapon, yeah? A sword. Like yours used to be.

JUSTINE: The Grandfather had a thousand weapons. More than a thousand. What do you think would happen if I dropped it?

ELIZA: You can't. Can you?

JUSTINE: i can. I can let it go without a moment's thought.

ELIZA: Don't.

F/X: The sound of a shadow-sword being dropped (as earlier).

ELIZA [sarcastic]: Oh, nice work. What are you trying to prove, anyway?

JUSTINE: It's only a weapon. One of many. Look.

ELIZA: Bloody hell. Is that a gun?

JUSTINE: I believe so. A pistol, or some such.

ELIZA: Where did it come from?

JUSTINE: Whenever my shadow drops its weapon, a new one grows in its place. See.

F/X: Shadow-weapon drop.

JUSTINE: Now I've got a sabre.

F/X: Shadow-weapon drop.

JUSTINE: A whip.

F/X: Shadow-weapon drop.

JUSTINE: A cudgel.

F/X: Shadow-weapon drop.

JUSTINE: A bayonet.

ELIZA: Stop it, Justine.

F/X: Throughout these next few lines, there's a succession of dropping sounds.

JUSTINE: A flail, a morning star, a grenade...

ELIZA: Stop it!

JUSTINE: A longbow, a fusion bomb, an axe...

ELIZA: Stop it!

F/X: The sounds stop.

ELIZA: Those are the Grandfather's weapons, for God's sake! You can't just throw them away!

JUSTINE: It doesn't matter. They never end. I spent half an hour this afternoon, dropping weapons and watching my shadow grow new ones. That's why the room's so dark, I'm afraid. It's full of the cast-off shadows.

ELIZA: There can't be an infinite number. Surely.

JUSTINE: Why not? It's as I said. I believe I've become a siege engine. A walking arsenal, that never runs out of ammunition. And even if I did run out, I can take new weapons into myself. Bond with them at a moment's notice. They fed me dinner this evening, and I swallowed my knife by mistake. I'm beginning to feel barely human at all. [Pause.] But I suppose that's all part of my vocation, isn't it?

Fade.

F/X: Outside. Big Ben strikes the half-hour; over the chimes, we hear footsteps on gravel.

MORLOCK: Half past already. Lord Ruthven should just be arriving at the War Office.

QUELCH: We're going to be late.

MORLOCK: We're going to be appropriately late.

QUELCH [scoffing]: "Appropriately"?

MORLOCK: Never be the first to arrive for any kind of negotiation. I'm banking on turning up two minutes and forty-eight seconds after the outsiders do, for the ideal psychological advantage.

QUELCH: You're full of shit, Morlock.

MORLOCK: Possibly, Godmother, quite possibly. But it's a very precise kind of shit.

F/X: That sky-opening effect again. Quite quiet this time, though. The footsteps stop.

MORLOCK: Ah. This could throw our schedule off a little.

QUELCH: More ships?

MORLOCK: Ruthven did say some of his underlings would be turning up to watch the signing.

F/X: Sky-opening-noise reaches its peak. A rumbling engine overhead (like the warship engine, but quieter).

QUELCH: That's not one of Ruthven's ships.

MORLOCK: No. It's Sontaran.

QUELCH: What?

MORLOCK: Sontaran landing craft. Curious, isn't it?

QUELCH: It's another attack!

MORLOCK: I don't think so. It's got its gun-ports closed. Of course, that could just be the Sontarans trying to prove how hard they are.

QUELCH: You say what you bloody like. I'm going back to the ritual hall. Any Sontarans come anywhere near the relics, and I'll have their bloody balls off.

MORLOCK: You don't want to witness me signing the agreement? It'll be a historic moment, I'm sure.

QUELCH [getting further away]: Shove it up your arse, Morlock.

MORLOCK: Well, suit yourself. [To himself.] Sontarans don't have testacles, anyway. Didn't have the heart to tell her..

Fade.

RUTHVEN: As you can see, Cousin, my colleague here has been quite thorough in drawing up the agreement. Her House might be new, but she's obviously got a keen eye for tradition.

ELIZA: Listen, I don't understand why I'm the one who's here to see this -

RUTHVEN: You're acting on behalf of the Godfather. It's quite all right, the agreement's been ratified by your Parliament. If the Godfather doesn't appear, all you've got to do is sign the document. By proxy, as it were.

ELIZA: Yeah, but I mean, I don't know the first thing about diplomacy -

F/X: Doors bursting open.

MORLOCK: Don't tell them that, Eliza. Second rule of negotiation. Never let the other side know your weaknesses.

RUTHVEN: Godfather Morlock. So glad you could join us.

LOLITA: Two minutes and forty-eight seconds late. Well-timed.

RUTHVEN [warningly]: Lolita. [Smoothly.] As it happens, Godfather, there's nothing left to negotiate. You agree to play fair by the other Houses, and you'll be recognized as a House again without any, shall we say, vendettas being carried out against you.

MORLOCK: Mmm. Let me have a look at that. [Paper rustle.] Real paper, too. How very quaint. Blah blah blah treaty of agreement etcetera etcetra... nothing interesting in the first three-hundred-and-fifty words... [Turns the page.] Nothing interesting in the second three-hundred-and-fifty either...

LOLITA: I think you'll find it's all in order.

MORLOCK: A-hah. Now, this is more like it. Page five, paragraph two. Hmm. Second paragraph, straight after a very boring one indeed. Just the place you'd put the clause you were trying to hide, I'd say.

LOLITA: If we were trying to hide something.

MORLOCK: Well, quite. According to this, our House's own "customs and practices" won't be persecuted under the law of the major Houses, is that right?

RUTHVEN: Of course. Your, ah, "rituals" are your own concern.

MORLOCK: Something of a change of tune, wouldn't you say? Seeing as it was our rituals that got us ostracized from the other Houses to begin with.

RUTHVEN: Changing times, Godfather. These days, we try to be more understanding towards the cultures of other Houses.

MORLOCK: I'm sure you do, I'm sure you do. So, we may continue with our foul and depraved practices without fear of rebuke from you and your people. But this is the part I'm interested in. Any member of Faction Paradox who's already committed a crime against the other Houses must be surrendered for trial. That's what it says in a nutshell, isn't it?

RUTHVEN: Well, it's... ah... Lolita?

LOLITA: It's a standard part of any treaty of recognition. We can't have diplomatic links with your Faction if any of you have already harmed members of Lord Ruthven's House. For example.

MORLOCK: Yes. "Crimes against another House". Bit vague, isn't it?

LOLITA: The list of crimes is in appendix number three. It's all there in black and white.

ELIZA [mumbles]: Godfather?

MORLOCK: Eliza?

ELIZA [mumbles]: I think they're on the level. Parliament checked this out. There's nobody in the city who's wanted for any of these crimes. The only people Lord Ruthven's House were after died years ago. That's what I heard, anyway.

MORLOCK: I don't doubt it. I just thought it was a curious clause, that's all. Especially given that it was on page five, paragraph two. And especially as the Sontarans are due to be here in about five point two seconds' time.

ELIZA: What?

MORLOCK: Three. Two. One.

F/X: Doors bursting open. Heavy footsteps marching inside.

MORLOCK: Ah. Sweet precision.

GENERAL: My name is General Kine of the Seventy-Ninth Sontaran Assault Corps. Do not reach for your weapons.

LOLITA: Don't worry. We won't.

ELIZA: We've been invaded!

RUTHVEN: Not at all, Cousin. General Kine's brought his men here at my request. Just a formality, please don't take it the wrong way.

ELIZA: Your request?

LOLITA: Security. Not that we don't trust you.

RUTHVEN: After all... well, how can I put this politely? There has been a certain amount of bad blood between House Tracolix and House Paradox. When we came here, we had no way of knowing how you'd react to us. We felt an independent security force might be a wise precaution. To settle any little disputes that might occur.

ELIZA: They attacked us!

RUTHVEN: As we understand the situation, you were attacked by a Sontaran short-range warship. However, there were, at the last count, over sixty-million Sontaran warships in existence.

LOLITA: Unless you're personally accusing General Kine of the attack...?

ELIZA: All Sontarans are the same!

LOLITA: You know, that's an incredibly racist remark.

ELIZA: Racist? How can it be racist? They're clones!

GENERAL [grudgingly]: We are sworn to the service of Miss Lolita and... Lord Ruthven. We are sworn to uphold the law of the Houses. It is our duty.

LOLITA: Quite.

MORLOCK: Sounds reasonable to me.

ELIZA: Reasonable?

MORLOCK: If Miss Lolita says the General didn't have anything to do with the attack, then I don't see why we shouldn't believe her.

LOLITA: Thankyou, Godfather.

MORLOCK: Despite the fact that all Sontarans are supposed to be sworn to the service of the Sontaran Imperator. Despite the fact that they're supposed to be genetically incapable of changing sides. And despite the fact that there hasn't been a single mercenary Sontaran unit in all of recorded history.

GENERAL: Don't provoke me, human.

MORLOCK: Or what?

GENERAL: Or... I shall be forced to correct you.

LOLITA [warningly]: General...

GENERAL: I shall be forced to correct you politely.

MORLOCK: Oh, well. If you put it like that.

RUTHVEN: We thought the General's men would make ideal witnesses to the signing of the agreement. After all, they are one hundred per cent reliable.

ELIZA: Look, I'm confused. Are we still going to sign that thing?

MORLOCK: Can't stand in the way of diplomacy, Eliza.

ELIZA [mutters]: Great.

Fade.

F/X: Background silence. The lines spoken by the Shadow in this next scene have huge amounts of distortion on them, as if the character is slowly phasing into the scene: underneath the F/X, the voice seems to be Godfather Morlock's.

SHADOW: Little Cousin? [Sing-song.] Little Cou-sin...

JUSTINE [sleepily]: Godfather...?

SHADOW: No, little Cousin. It's not your Godfather. Can you see me?

JUSTINE: No. No, I can't.

SHADOW: Good. That's how it should be.

JUSTINE: The room's too full of shadows. Am I still in my room?

SHADOW: What do you think?

JUSTINE: I think you want me to believe I'm dreaming. I think you want me to believe you're a phantom.

SHADOW: You are bright, aren't you? For someone who's so in the dark.

JUSTINE: This is my room. And I'm awake. [Pause.] Grandfather?

SHADOW: Is that who I am? The Grandfather?

JUSTINE: No. I don't think so. A messenger, perhaps.

SHADOW: A messenger from the Grandfather. Of course. And what do you think I've come to tell you?

JUSTINE: I've become a siege engine, sir. I expect you've come to give me my orders.

SHADOW: That's very good, little Cousin. And you're right. You're a weapon now. The question is, who are you fighting? And who are you fighting for?

JUSTINE: I'm sure you're about to tell me.

SHADOW: You don't trust the outsiders, do you? You should. They're here to take Faction Paradox back to the homeworld. To restore our family to its rightful place. Isn't that a good thing?

JUSTINE: I was led to believe we didn't need the other Houses. We stand alone. We always have.

SHADOW: But how much more convenient, to be at the centre of the action. To be able to work in secret, but right under the noses of the others. You should listen to the visitors. To Ruthven and his charming advisor. They know the real enemy.

JUSTINE: Is the enemy not already here, then?

SHADOW: What do you think?

JUSTINE: For myself? I think you're lying, sir.

SHADOW [pause]: Lying?

JUSTINE: Please. Light the lamp. It's on the desk, by your side.

SHADOW: I'm a shadow, little Cousin. I can't exist in the light.

JUSTINE: Shadows need light to give them definition. Please don't treat me like a child. Light the lamp, if you would.

SHADOW/LOLITA [voice changes halfway through the sentence]: I've got to admit, I'm impressed. I wouldn't have expected a cultist to be so perceptive.

F/X: A match is struck.

LOLITA: And don't call me "sir".

JUSTINE: You're Lord Ruthven's aide. The alien woman. Lolita.

F/X: Baby gurgling in the background..

LOLITA: You're very well-informed. But I suppose that's part of your job, isn't it? As a siege engine.

JUSTINE: Many of my family would take offence at your deceit. Impersonating a messenger of the Grandfather is not polite.

LOLITA: Well, you can't blame me for trying.

JUSTINE: The spirits are with us, Miss Lolita. I trust you'll behave accordingly.

LOLITA: Oh, you can rely on me. Now, shall we talk business?

Fade.

F/X: Outside. The noise of a great crowd all around us. Several hundred people, probably.

MORLOCK: Bad taste, I'd say.

ELIZA: Sorry?

MORLOCK: Calling the meeting in Trafalgar Square. Or what's left of it. Given that it was Sontarans who bombed the place.

ELIZA: How many of them are there, anyway?

MORLOCK: I don't know. I've lost count.

ELIZA: Really?

MORLOCK: No. There are thirty-eight of them. I was pretending I didn't know for dramatic effect.

ELIZA: Reminds me of a demo. The way they're surrounding the place. Like policemen. Do they always do that?

MORLOCK: Do what?

ELIZA: Keep their hands on their gun-belts all the time.

MORLOCK: Oh, whenever it's convenient. It's probably a Freudian thing. Not that homunculi species tend to have a good grasp of Freudian theory.

ELIZA: Godfather?

MORLOCK: Mmm?

ELIZA: Who are all these people? Not the Sontarans. The crowd. They're all family, aren't they?

MORLOCK: Yes. What gave it away?

ELIZA: The bat-skulls and the black velvet, mostly.

MORLOCK: A general meeting's not very common. They like to dress up for it. You're wearing your armour, aren't you?

ELIZA: Yeah, but I tend to do that when there are guns around. It's kind of a nervous habit. So where did they all come from? I've never seen this many people in the city before.

MORLOCK: Not all at once. It's an Eleven-Day Empire, Eliza. They've been called together from all their private moments. Most of them have got minutes and hours claimed for themselves inside the Empire, they don't normally come out into the open.

ELIZA: So, let's summarize. A bunch of aliens who've already attacked us once have got us all in one place, and we're surrounded. Have I missed anything?

MORLOCK: We're protected. There's no cause for alarm just yet.

ELIZA: Protected how?

MORLOCK: The spirits. How else?

ELIZA [not convinced]: Spirits. Right.

MORLOCK: There are spirits bound to the whole of this city. If anything breaches the local protocol, the spirits should sort it all out. If they

can slow down a whole Sontaran warship, I'm sure they can deal with a few dozen troops.

ELIZA: Yeah, well. I'd be more convinced if we weren't standing in a bunch of ruins.

MORLOCK: Yes. Pity about the Grandfather's Column.

ELIZA: Still, look on the bright side. At least they got rid of the stone lions.

MORLOCK: You didn't like the lions?

ELIZA: Gave me the shits.

RUTHVEN [over a PA system, a long way away]: Ladies and gentlemen... if I could have your attention.

ELIZA: Looks like the show's starting.

Fade.

JUSTINE: You were trying to recruit me to your cause, I take it?

LOLITA: Let's say it'd make things more convenient if you didn't get in the way.

JUSTINE: Am I so important, then? That you'd come for me personally?

LOLITA [laughs]: Don't flatter yourself. You're a single warhead, that's all. I don't mind admitting it, though. The more weapons I've got on my side, the better. I felt it happen, by the way. I didn't want to worry Ruthven with the details, but I knew they'd stuck the Grandfather's shadow

to someone. I wouldn't have expected it to be a nice little English rose like you.

JUSTINE: I was the only suitable candidate.

LOLITA: What, because you were one of the shadowless? Rubbish. Your fairy Godmothers might not have told you this, little Cousin, but the Faction's got hundreds of agents without shadows. They just don't mix with the rest of you. So why you, I wonder?

JUSTINE: I'm not afraid of you, Miss Lolita.

LOLITA: I'm sure you're not. That's how I know they haven't told you anything remotely useful. You don't know the first thing about House politics, for a start.

JUSTINE: And which House do you represent, may I ask?

LOLITA: None that you'd have heard of. We don't have many children yet. But I'm working on it. And the offer's still open, incidentally. Trust me, there's always a place in the future for weapons.

JUSTINE: My place is with my family. I'm afraid I'll have to decline your offer.

LOLITA: Oh, stop talking like there's a stick up your backside. I could kill you here and now. In a second.

JUSTINE: Then you should try to do so. But if I am, as you say, a mere warhead... there's a chance that I might detonate, surely?

LOLITA: You really don't understand, do you? I'm not one of Ruthven's people. Think of me as the new blood. The wave of the future. Fifteen per cent of my biology's devoted to weapons systems, there are defences hardwired into every cell of my body. There isn't one weapon in a thousand that can even scratch me.

JUSTINE: Then you'd best make sure I don't have more than a thousand weapons. Hadn't you?

LOLITA [sighs]: All right. Don't say I didn't give you a chance.

F/X: The door creaks open.

LOLITA: Goodbye, Justine. I don't expect to ever have to speak to you again.

F/X: The door creaks closed.

JUSTINE [to herself, after a pause]: Godfather watch me. Spirits maintain me.

Fade.

F/X: Crowd noise, but it's not as loud as it was.

RUTHVEN [PA]: As most of you will already be aware, these are exciting new times for both your House and mine. And please be assured, by the way, that the military personnel here are a security force only. Now, I know many of you will still be having doubts about the nature of our visit, so I'd like to present the individual who I think can best explain things. Miss Lolita, of House... Lolita.

ELIZA [still foreground]: What's House Lolita?

MORLOCK: There isn't one. Not that I know of, anyway.

LOLITA [PA]: Thankyou, Lord Ruthven. And thank you all, Brothers and Sisters, Mothers and Fathers, Godmothers and Godfathers and Cousins. Thank you for coming here to listen to what I've got to say. It's good news, for the most part. A new era of peace for your Empire. As of today, with the

signing of the agreement between House Paradox and the Council of Houses, your Faction is once again recognized as a major power. Official diplomatic links have been restored.

F/X: The crowd gets a bit restless.

LOLITA [PA]: As Lord Ruthven said, some of you won't know how to take this. Maybe you're unsure of my... of our motives. But believe me, this is for your benefit as well as mine. In times of difficulty, we'll be there to help you. We know that certain... problems... have been experienced on many of your colony worlds...

F/X: Upsurge of ill-feeling from the crowd.

ELIZA: Problems? The other Houses have been wiping us out for years...

MORLOCK: She knows how to rub salt into the wound, I'll give her that. Do you get the feeling she's enjoying this?

LOLITA [PA]: However - however - we intend to assist you in the rebuilding of those settlements which have suffered. If you want assistance, anyway.

ELIZA: Now she's just taking the piss.

LOLITA [PA]: But there are certain terms of the agreement which you should all be aware of. And that brings me to the reason for this meeting. You should know that, under the treaty, various legal matters have to be settled between the Houses. In short; all members of Faction Paradox who've committed serious moral crimes directly against the other Houses must immediately be surrendered for trial.

F/X: Uneasy crowd again.

LOLITA [PA]: It... grieves me to have to begin this new era of co-operation with a reprisal. However, a stand has to be made. And it's in this spirit that the Sontaran police force has been assembled here today, in the heart of your city. You see... I'm afraid there's a criminal in our midst.

MORLOCK [significantly]: Ah.

ELIZA: You said the Sontarans couldn't do anything. You said we were protected.

MORLOCK: The spirits only defend the law of the city. Now the agreement's been signed -

ELIZA: The Sontarans are the law?

MORLOCK: In this matter, certainly.

RUTHVEN [PA]: This wasn't what we... [corrects himself] Lolita, we discussed this. You said none of these people were wanted by the other Houses.

LOLITA [PA]: True. But we weren't in possession of all the facts. There's something Faction Paradox has been keeping from us

RUTHVEN [PA]: Is there?

LOLITA [PA]: Might I remind you - might I remind you all - that under the agreement, although crimes against the major Houses will be punished, in all other respects the law of Faction Paradox will still be maintained in the Faction's territory. It's not our place to meddle in local customs and beliefs.

RUTHVEN [PA]: I don't see -

LOLITA [PA]: And might I also remind you of certain articles in the Faction's own protocols? Namely, the laws governing the Transition of

Affairs.

MORLOCK: Oh dear.

ELIZA: What's she talking about? What does "Transition of Affairs" mean?

MORLOCK: I'm rather afraid I've just realized the significance of page five, paragraph two.

ELIZA: Godfather...? Godfather, where are you going?

LOLITA [PA]: If any of you need reminding, let me make the situation perfectly clear.

ELIZA [to herself]: Yes please.

LOLITA [PA]: By the Faction's own traditions - the laws covering Transition of Affairs - the shadow of the individual, being the guiding instinct of that person, is more important than the flesh. If the body dies, and the shadow of that body is somehow transplanted to another person, then the new host takes on all the responsibilities of the previous owner. An archaic law, I know. But the law's the law. It's a question of principle.

RUTHVEN [PA]: What are you talking about? They don't transplant shadows any more, do they?

LOLITA [PA]: In the spirit of the treaty, it's my sad duty to inform you that one member of your House is currently harbouring the shadow of a known and wanted criminal. This knowledge was kept from us on our arrival, and it's only through sheer luck that we've discovered the truth. And according to your own customs, that criminal's culpability now passes to the current owner of the shadow.

ELIZA: Shit. Justine.

LOLITA [PA]: This individual bears the full weight of the crimes committed by one of your ancestors, and, under the terms of the treaty, if the guilty party isn't immediately surrendered then we'll have no option but to put the Eleven-Day Empire under martial law. We demand the one who carries the shadow of Grandfather Paradox.

F/X: Crowd goes mental.

Fade.

JUSTINE [under her breath]: Grandfather see me, spirits maintain me. I'm burning the lamp to cast more light. I'm casting more light to make you deeper.

F/X: Match strike.

JUSTINE [less formal]: This is... personal. I'm sorry. It's not in my nature to ask for anything, especially not from the spirits. But you're the city, aren't you? I understand that now. It's you who hold this city together. You are the laws. Which is why I'm appealing to you, I suppose. I feel that... I've been given great gifts. I know I have. The Grandfather's shadow. The Grandfather's mantle. But it wasn't what I asked for. I did it out of duty, not out of wanting. Please, I don't think I can -.

F/X: Door bursts open.

MORLOCK [hurriedly]: They don't give refunds.

JUSTINE: Godfather -

MORLOCK: No time. Are you armed? Of course you're armed. Stupid question. What are you armed with?

JUSTINE: I don't -

MORLOCK: Your shadow! Quickly!

JUSTINE: It's... I think it's an axe.

MORLOCK: That'll do. We have to leave here. I'll explain on the way.

JUSTINE: The way where?

MORLOCK [heading away]: Come on. And stop calling me "Godfather", we'll save seven-tenths of a second every sentence.

Fade.

F/X: Two sets of footsteps in the corridors.

JUSTINE: What's happening?

MORLOCK: Lolita's happening. You're now officially a wanted criminal. Congratulations.

JUSTINE: Lolita tried to recruit me...

MORLOCK: Did she? How nice for you. What did you say?

JUSTINE: I told her I was loyal to the family.

MORLOCK: That's not what you told the spirits just now.

JUSTINE: That's not fair!

F/X: Footsteps halt.

MORLOCK: I'll ask you this once. We don't have time to argue. Do you want the Grandfather's mantle? Or don't you?

JUSTINE: I...

MORLOCK: Five, four, three, two...

JUSTINE: I don't know!

MORLOCK [sighs]: All right. That'll have to do. Come with me.

F/X: Footsteps start again.

JUSTINE: I thought we were protected?

MORLOCK: The spirits aren't on our side any more. Which is why you're leaving the Eleven-Day Empire before the Sontarans find you.

JUSTINE: Leaving?

F/X: Burst of energy fire.

MORLOCK: Back here! Now!

F/X: Footsteps stop. Rapid bursts of energy fire from up the corridor.

SONTARAN [shouting]: Throw out your weapons and surrender. You have one chance to remain alive.

JUSTINE [heavy breathing]: Why are they after me? I haven't done anything!

MORLOCK: Original sin. Use your weapon.

JUSTINE: But I've never used an axe before -

F/X: More energy fire.

MORLOCK: Just do it!

JUSTINE: I'll try.

F/X: A constant energy weapon barrage. Then the sound of a shadow-weapon being wielded. The sound ends with a muffled Sontaran squawk, and the energy fire ends.

MORLOCK: Interesting, isn't it? The way dead Sontarans always smell of roast beef.

JUSTINE: The axe. Did I use it properly?

MORLOCK: I think that's a fair assumption. Come on.

F/X: Running steps.

JUSTINE: You haven't told me where we're going.

MORLOCK: Lord Ruthven's ship. It's your best way out.

JUSTINE: It belongs to one of the Houses!

MORLOCK: May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. This way.

Fade.

F/X: Trafalgar Square. By the sound of it, the crowd's on the verge of rioting. Also, baby gurglings in the foreground.

GENERAL [PA]: Law is being enforced by the Seventy-Ninth Sontaran Assault Corps. Discipline will be maintained. Remain calm and we will not open fire.

RUTHVEN [angry]: Lolita! What do you think you're doing?

LOLITA: Upholding law and order, funnily enough.

RUTHVEN: What?

LOLITA: I know. I'm surprised too, but I'm sure I'll grow into it.

RUTHVEN: This wasn't in the plan!

LOLITA: New developments, I'm afraid. It's lucky the Sontarans are flexible.

GENERAL [PA]: Warning fire! Now!

F/X: Mass energy fire over the square. It doesn't calm the crowd down.

LOLITA: Flexible within certain parameters, anyway.

RUTHVEN: You said we were just going to bring the Faction to heel! You said it'd make us look strong in front of the Council! You never said anything about a full-scale invasion!

LOLITA: Oh, didn't I? I think the clue was when I insisted on bringing a warship full of Sontarans. Or did you miss that part?

RUTHVEN: You can't do this!

LOLITA: I think you'll find it's all quite legal, under the terms of the agreement. Go back to your ship, Ruthven. Your bodyguards are going to get bored without you.

RUTHVEN: My bodyguards, Miss Lolita, are down in the crowd trying to stop a riot. When we get back to the homeworld -

LOLITA: In the crowd? All of them?

RUTHVEN: If someone doesn't stop this -

LOLITA: Ruthven! If all your guards are down there, who's watching the ship?

RUTHVEN: I don't know. The Sontarans, I should think. Why should I

-

LOLITA: General Kine!

GENERAL [approaching]: The situation is under control.

F/X: Random bursts of energy fire.

LOLITA: Evidently. I'm declaring this a state of emergency, General. Faction Paradox has failed to hand over the criminal, and is therefore in breach of the agreement and in breach of Council protocol. Martial law it is.

RUTHVEN: This wasn't what we agreed!

LOLITA: And General? You can shoot this idiot if you think it's necessary. Please think it's necessary as soon as possible.

RUTHVEN: You've just declared war on House Tracolix, Lolita. You realize that, don't you? And what about those "spirits" of theirs? They're meant to be protecting this place. What are you going to do about them?

LOLITA [sighs]: All right, I'll make this simple. House Tracolix isn't going to do a thing to me, Ruthven, because I'm acting quite legally. Besides which, your House is run by incontinent old leches who lost all their power at more or less the same time they all lost their teeth, and you'll be lucky if there's a single member of your bloodline surviving in a year's time anyway. I only brought you here to give myself some old-school credibility, so frankly you've already out-lived your usefulness. And you might be interested in knowing that I've already talked to the city's spirits, and they're quite happy about this situation, thankyou very much.

RUTHVEN [cynical]: Talked to the spirits? When?

LOLITA: Sixteen seconds ago. While I was explaining things to you. I can communicate on eight-hundred different wavelengths at once, so to be honest I think they understood me a damn sight better than they understand any of the cultists. General? Send some of your men to Ruthven's ship.

GENERAL: I make the tactical decisions. You're a civilian.

LOLITA: Fine. Then I tactically suggest guarding Ruthven's ship before our anybody can get away. I've already set up a time-block around Parliament, so none of the Faction's people can get out on their own. Is everybody happy? [No response.] Finally, a concensus. You see, Ruthven? Nought to martial law in an afternoon. There's a lesson in politics for you.

F/X: The crowd sound drops, suggesting that we've moved some distance away from it.

JUSTINE [running]: They've started firing on the crowds.

ELIZA [arriving]: Justine!

JUSTINE: Cousin. We're leaving.

MORLOCK: You're leaving. To be precise.

ELIZA: Leaving for where?

MORLOCK: The homeworld.

ELIZA: Come again?

MORLOCK: Whatever Lolita's up to, it's all to do with politics back on the Homeworld. Now we've been recognized as a House, we're allowed to send our own kind there.

ELIZA: You can't send Justine! What about Lolita's people? They'll crucify her!

MORLOCK: I doubt Lolita's got any people. Not above breast-feeding age. Besides, the only reason she's allowed to arrest Justine is that Justine's culpable under Faction law. Outside of the Eleven-Day Empire, Faction law doesn't apply. And on top of all that, most of the Houses are engaged in a particularly long and messy war at the moment, so it's not as if they don't have better things to do with their time. Now. This way.

JUSTINE: And am I given any choice in this?

ELIZA: What?

JUSTINE: Forgive me, Godfather. You don't seem to have explained the purpose of this to me.

ELIZA: Because they'll kill you if you don't get out of here. How's that for a start?

JUSTINE: You're always telling me I should be more questioning, Cousin.

ELIZA: What, now?

MORLOCK: It's for the sake of the family, Justine. Didn't you say something about being bound to service?

JUSTINE: Of course. I just...

MORLOCK: Yes?

JUSTINE: I feel I should know all the facts.

MORLOCK: Good. Intelligent reasoning. Keep it up.

JUSTINE: Yes, Godfather.

MORLOCK: But not at this exact moment.

JUSTINE: No, Godfather.

ELIZA: Can we go somewhere else? Anywhere. Just not out in the open. Please.

Fade.

GRAMS: Background music.

VOICE: Reconstruction number six. From appendix three of the treaty of recognition.

LOLITA: The following is a list of crimes against the major Houses for which members of House Paradox, AKA Faction Paradox, can still be held culpable. One: the killing of a member of another House, "killing" being defined as "the taking of one of the victim's lives", in accordance with the homeworld's Partial Homicide protocols. Two: plotting against another House, including such offences as supplying privileged information on that House to alien powers (see also appendix four). Three: direct time offences against a member of another House, including attempts to change the victim's timeline to a degree of no less than fifty-three millistates. If the change to the timeline exceeds seventy-two millistates, the victim shall be considered a different person, and the offence will be considered murder, in accordance with the homeworld's Total Homicide protocols. Four: the killing of a House. If an individual should be suspected of any such domicile, and if the evidence is substantial enough to warrant trial proceedings, then the severity of the crime demands an immediate transfer of the wanted party into the care of the Council of Houses. Should House Paradox not comply, then the other Houses shall have the right to take instant and drastic action, upto and including military force.

F/X: Background of Ruthven's ship.

GENERAL: So. This is Ruthven's idea of a ship.

SONTARAN: The technology is impressive, General. But the construction...

GENERAL: Corrupt. Diseased. Ruthven based its design on his own genetic matter.

SONTARAN: A sign of vanity.

GENERAL: Ruthven's House is old and weak. Military history teaches us that falling empires will always resort to the depraved and the disfunctional. But we should not underestimate House Lolita.

SONTARAN: Permission to ask a question, General.

GENERAL: Given.

SONTARAN: Do you trust the female?

GENERAL: No. But she will not be necessary for long. The technology she promises us will be ours no matter what the outcome of this operation.

SONTARAN: She failed to warn us about the cultists' weapons.

GENERAL: It makes no difference to her how many of us die. We can afford to sacrifice a few thousand troops to her ambitions. The spoils will be worth it. The technology of Faction Paradox will be ours.

F/X: The swoosh of a shadow-weapon. Followed by two thuds.

GENERAL: Did you hear that, Lieutenant? [No reply.] Lieutenant?

MORLOCK: I think the words I'm looking for are "behind you".

GENERAL: You!

MORLOCK: Us. Well done, Cousin Justine. Clean decapitation.

JUSTINE: Godfather.

MORLOCK: Now. General Kine, isn't it? What are we going to do with you, hmm?

GENERAL: Do not attempt to threaten me. This area is guarded by a patrol of the Seventy-Ninth Sontaran Assault Corps. If I die, you will not survive long.

ELIZA: It was guarded by a patrol. Justine got rid of them.

MORLOCK: Oh yes. She can be quite psychotic, when she comes out of her shell.

GENERAL: One female? Against a Sontaran patrol?

JUSTINE: I had the advantage of weapons, sir.

MORLOCK: And that's nothing. You should have seen her when she was younger.

JUSTINE: I was... reckless.

MORLOCK: Ignore her,.she's just being modest. She was a vicious little hellcat, ane everybody knows it.

GENERAL: I am an officer of the Sontaran elite. I am immune to all known forms of torture and psychological warfare. You do not frighten me,

cultist.

MORLOCK: No, we don't, do we? You know, you're quite noble, in your own ugly pig-headed way. All right, General. You'd better go.

GENERAL: What?

MORLOCK: Go. Go on. Leave the ship. Sod off. Depart.

GENERAL: You're... letting me go?

MORLOCK: We've already wasted thirty-four seconds on you. Let's not compound the damage.

GENERAL: As an officer of the Sontaran Empire, I demand you treat me in a manner that befits a prisoner of war!

MORLOCK: Would you rather we killed you?

GENERAL: Do not mock me!

MORLOCK: Oh, all right then. Justine?

F/X: Weapon swoosh.

MORLOCK: There. You've lost an arm. Will you leave us alone now?

GENERAL [strained, in pain]: Very well. I will leave.

ELIZA: Are you sure this is a good idea?

MORLOCK: Letting him go? Of course it is. Sooner or later, he's going to try to kill Lolita. He'll fail miserably, of course, because she's cleverer than he is. But he might slow her down a bit. Are you still here?

GENERAL [hissing]: Cultist!

F/X: The General stomping off in a sulk. If we can manage that.

MORLOCK: So. We've got three minutes and four seconds before he comes back with another patrol. Justine? Can you operate the ship?

JUSTINE: I've seen vessels like this before. I think I understand the basic principles.

MORLOCK: Good. Now then, time I left. Remember what I said, Justine. Head for the old homeworld, you'll be safe there. Relatively.

JUSTINE: You're staying here?

MORLOCK: Of course I am. Somebody's got to hold the fort.

ELIZA: Won't they arrest you?

MORLOCK: I should imagine they'll try to have me executed. I'll have to improvise. Goodbye, Cousin. Goodbye, Cousin.

JUSTINE: Godfather.

ELIZA: Yeah. Bye.

F/X: Morlock walking away, out of the ship.

ELIZA: Why do I get the feeling you don't want me here?

JUSTINE: Cousin. Please. I'm trying to activate the controls.

ELIZA: You're not even touching the controls.

JUSTINE: That's hardly important. [Pause.] There. We're ready.

ELIZA: Can you steer it to the homeworld?

JUSTINE: I don't know. That's not where we're going.

ELIZA: What do you mean, that's not where we're going? Weren't you listening?

JUSTINE: Shh. Please, Cousin. I have to initiate the take-off procedure.

ELIZA: But you're not going to tell me where... shit.

JUSTINE: Cousin?

ELIZA: I just kicked the General's arm under the console. Sorry.

Fade.

F/X: Trafalgar Square. The riot goes on. Energy discharges meet the swooshing of shadow-arms. Baby gurgling over this.

LOLITA [to baby]: There's a good little thing. There's a good... what's the word? Girl. That's it. Oh, look. Kine's lost a limb, hasn't he? Need a plaster, General?

GENERAL [arriving, gritting his teeth]: Medical assistance is not required.

LOLITA: Well, look on the bright side. Around here, one-armed men are supposed to be lucky. I hope you've secured Ruthven's ship?

GENERAL [gritting his teeth]: No.

LOLITA: What?

GENERAL: The enemy had superior weaponry. Weaponry which you failed to brief us on.

LOLITA: You said I should leave the military side to you, didn't you? So what happened? You ran away, is that it?

GENERAL: The cultist. The Godfather. He allowed me to leave.

LOLITA: Oh, did he now?

GENERAL: After making certain predictions. Predictions I intend to make sure do not come to pass.

F/X: Above the noise of the riot, we hear the engine of Ruthven's ship as it lifts off.

LOLITA: You know, I think it's time to bring my plans forward a little.

Fade.

F/X: The echo of the ritual hall.

QUELCH [screeching]: Morlock!

MORLOCK: Ah. The charming Godmother. Still keeping an eye on the relics, I see.

QUELCH: This is all your fault, Morlock!

MORLOCK: A note of disrespect in your voice. How terribly novel. In what way, my fault?

QUELCH: You told Parliament to invite them here. You told them to sign the agreement.

MORLOCK: Oh, Godmother. Do you really think it made a difference? All this was planned. Planned by someone who knew we'd be

stupid enough to fall into a trap. How could we possibly have resisted an opponent that clever? Besides, we've done our job. The Grandfather's shadow is with its new owner. She's on her way to the homeworld even as we speak. We've achieved everything we wanted to achieve.

QUELCH: Everything you wanted to achieve.

MORLOCK: Well, yes. But I'm the acting emergency speaker, so I get to use the Royal We and force you to take some of the blame. That's what family's for.

QUELCH: They're taking the city apart!

MORLOCK: Mmm. Ladybird, ladybird, flay away home. Your house is on fire, your children are gone.

QUELCH: You're bloody mad.

MORLOCK: It's an old nursery-rhyme. About witches. People used to burn their homes down, you know. Wipe out their whole bloodlines.

F/X: Doors bursting open.

MORLOCK: My past catches up with me.

SONTARAN: You are prisoners of the Seventy-Ninth Sontaran Assault Corps. Any attempt to resist will be met with lethal response.

Fade.

F/X: The sound of the riot, plus the sound of the sky opening, plus the sound of a Sontaran warship's massive engines overhead. Quite loud, all in all.

RUTHVEN: You're not going to get away with this, you know.

LOLITA: Don't be absurd, Ruthven. I already am getting away with it.

RUTHVEN: That's a warship the Sontarans are bringing through. This isn't just a peacekeeping operation now. You really think the other Houses are going to believe a word of it?

LOLITA: The General must need reinforcements. Anyway, the spirits aren't against us now. So the Sontarans can move as many ships into the Eleven-Day Empire as they like, they're not going to get any resistance.

RUTHVEN: The casualties are going to be enormous -

LOLITA: Well spotted.

Fade.

F/X: Background of Ruthven's ship.

ELIZA: Are we flying yet?

JUSTINE: Yes. We're flying.

ELIZA: Wouldn't have expected the Houses to use flying ships. Would've thought they'd go for something a bit more... flash.

JUSTINE: It's a matter of taste. The ship's adaptable. It can mimic any other form of transport.

ELIZA: So why's it a different shape on the inside than on the outside?

JUSTINE: Lord Ruthven's tastes must have been somewhat eccentric.

ELIZA: I can see that. Justine?

JUSTINE: Yes?

ELIZA: Where are you taking us? I'm only asking because... you know. Our whole lives may depend on it and everything.

JUSTINE: I don't know.

ELIZA: You don't know? Okay, just tell me this. Why aren't you doing what Morlock said?

F/X: Muffled bass explosion.

ELIZA: What was that?

JUSTINE: I think we're being attacked.

Fade.

F/X: Echoing footsteps in the corridors of Parliament.

GENERAL: My troops report less resistance in the inner city area. The cultists know they can't fight us without their spirits to protect them.

LOLITA: Good. Casualties so far?

GENERAL: Ours or theirs?

LOLITA: To be honest with you, General, I couldn't care less. I just wanted to sound interested. Any sign of Ruthven's ship?

GENERAL: It will have left the Eleven-Day Empire by now.

LOLITA: But you haven't checked? No, let me guess. You can't get a fix on it, the ship's got detection shielding. Typical Ruthven.

GENERAL: You're sure the cultists have no reinforcements?

LOLITA: Just half a dozen warships. But none of them are anywhere near the Empire. I can pick them off one at a time as soon as things are tied up here.

GENERAL: I don't appreciate having to take this much on trust.

LOLITA: Oh, trust's a wonderful thing, General. Especially when it's someone else's.

SONTARAN [up the corridor, so distant]: General Kine!

F/X: The footsteps cease.

SONTARAN [getting closer]: The prisoners, General.

F/X: Lots of heavy footfalls as the prisoners are bundled up the corridor.

QUELCH: Get your bastard hands off me!

MORLOCK: Good evening, Miss Lolita. And hello again, General. Not bleeding from your wound much, I'm glad to see. Must be quite something, having a cardiovascular system that's two-hundred-and-ten per cent more efficient than human normal. At a guess.

LOLITA: Ignore him, General. He's just showing off. Well, Godfather, this is a surprise. I'd assumed you'd be on the ship.

MORLOCK: Hardly important. Everything's been set in motion. We've all played our parts. I may as well throw myself on your mercy.

LOLITA: Not a great choice of words, Godfather.

MORLOCK: Why? Because you don't have any mercy?

LOLITA: No. Because I got bored and stopped listening halfway through the sentence. All right, General. Bring the prisoners. We've got a ritual to perform.

QUELCH: What?

Fade.

F/X: Ruthven's ship background. Another muffled explosion.

JUSTINE: It's a warship. The sky's opened up again.

ELIZA: Shooting at us?

JUSTINE: No. We're being caught in the aftershock, that's all. We're a lot smaller than they are. Especially on the outside.

F/X: Another explosion.

JUSTINE: Tower Hill.

ELIZA: What about it?

JUSTINE: I'm going to land there. It's outside of family territory, the Sontarans won't have occupied it yet. We should be safe.

ELIZA: For a while, yeah. Why there? Why not just get out of the Empire?

F/X: Yet another explosion.

JUSTINE: I believe this is the point when I should tell you to hold tight.

ELIZA: Check.

Fade.

F/X: Echo of the ritual hall.

LOLITA: Well then. This must be the ritual hall, am I right? The usual decor, I see. Bloodstains and shadows. Can't be sanitary. Bring them all in, General. Ruthven as well.

F/X: Many pairs of feet on the floor.

QUELCH [real screech]: Get out! Get out of my shrine!

LOLITA: No. General Kine? Aim that gun at the Godmother, please. I want to make a point. Thankyou. Now, we have what I think they call a situation. There's a dangerous criminal on the run, and I've got good reason to suspect that some of you know where she is. True?

QUELCH: The brat?

LOLITA: Well? Where is she, Morlock?

MORLOCK: I haven't the faintest idea. I'm lying, obviously, but I'm sure you would have expected that.

LOLITA: And if I said that I'll kill everyone in the Eleven-Day Empire unless you tell me...?

MORLOCK: Wouldn't make an awful lot of difference, to be honest.

QUELCH: Morlock!

MORLOCK: It's a matter of principle. Can't let people threaten me into submission. I'd never hear the end of it. Anybody who wanted anything

would just start threatening people left, right and centre.

LOLITA: Good. All right then. If you won't tell me where the fugitive's gone, I'll have to call in the experts. Your spirits. They run this city, don't they? In a way, I suppose they are this city.

MORLOCK: But you already know that. I understand you're in contact with them. I presume that's why you stole the biodata from our archives?

LOLITA: Yes. Your link to the spirits is in your blood, isn't it? Once I had a sample, getting in touch with them was a piece of cake. And do you know what? They really don't give a toss about you. Must be terrible. Spending your lives in awe of things like that, and then finding out they hardly even know you're there.

RUTHVEN: Wait a moment. There aren't any "spirits". It's superstition, it's just a front they use to scare people. You're not seriously telling me this place is run by -

LOLITA: Oh, for pity's sake, Ruthven. Do try to keep up. You know what we had to go through to get our ships into this city. What do you think was trying to stop us?

RUTHVEN: I don't know. Defences... some kind of time anomaly...

LOLITA: Spirits, time anomaly, what's the difference? Anyway. As I was saying. The spirits are the foundation of this city, isn't that right?

QUELCH: So?

LOLITA: So, your little runt with the heavy weaponry is part of this city. Dedicated to the spirits. Which means the spirits should be able to track her down.

QUELCH: They'll never do it. They'll never help you.

LOLITA: Of course they will. I speak their language. The trouble is, they can be a bit detached from things sometimes. I don't think they'd have the faintest idea what I was talking about, if I asked them to track down one snivelling little Cousin. It'd be like asking a dog to pick out one specific flea. Which is why I'm not going to bother asking.

QUELCH: Hah!

LOLITA: I'm going to invoke them instead.

RUTHVEN [confused]: What?

QUELCH [horrified]: What?

MORLOCK: Well, it's a solution, I suppose.

RUTHVEN: Invoke? What's that supposed to mean?

MORLOCK: It means she's going to ask the spirits to manifest themselves. Not something we usually do. It's not very polite.

Fade.

F/X: Outside, but there are no sounds of rioting. A faint wind and the shuffling of wings, suggesting the home of the Unkindnesses. More prominent is the sound of Ruthven's ship, as it comes in to land nearby.

UNKINDNESS 2: She's back.

UNKINDNESS 3: Dodo woman.

UNKINDNESS 1: No more dodo.

UNKINDNESS 2: No more dodo. No more missing links. Very sad.

UNKINDNESS 3: Missing links. Not kosha.

UNKINDNESS 2: Sad anyway.

F/X: Footsteps crossing the gravelly ground. Two pairs of feet.

ELIZA: God. What are they?

JUSTINE: The Unkindnesses. We should have brought them an offering.

ELIZA: Bit late to mention it now, don't you think?

F/X: Footsteps stops.

JUSTINE [politely]: Unkindnesses.

UNKINDNESS 1: Justine. Cousin Justine. Baby chick.

UNKINDNESS 3: No more dodo.

UNKINDNESS 1: Knew you'd come back. Saw you come back.

JUSTINE: I'm led to believe you know everything, sir. That is why I'm here.

UNKINDNESS 3: Is this the meat?

ELIZA: Is he talking about me?

JUSTINE: She is not meat. She's my friend.

ELIZA: These things eat people?

UNKINDNESS 1: Oh yes. People are kosha. Human people.

ELIZA: Justine... I think we'd better go.

UNKINDNESS 1: Little Cousin-chicks aren't human. Faction blood now. Tainted meat.

JUSTINE: I came to ask you a question.

UNKINDNESS 1: Then ask.

UNKINDNESS 3: Can't answer. Need another dodo.

UNKINDNESS 2: Shh. No more dodo.

JUSTINE: You know what's happened to me, I hope?

UNKINDNESS 1: Oh, yes. Little witch-Cousin's got a big shadow now. Big shadow.

JUSTINE: Then tell me this. Did you know? Is this what you saw when you looked into the future?

ELIZA [aside, hissing]: What are you doing?

JUSTINE: I need to know the truth.

ELIZA: What truth? What are you talking about?

JUSTINE: It was convenient, don't you think? The Faction needed someone without a shadow to take on the Grandfather's weapons. Just after I had my shadow taken from me. [To Unkindnesses.] Well? Is this what you saw?

UNKINDNESS 1: We saw. This is the future.

JUSTINE: So you knew I'd lose my shadow. You knew I'd be given this one.

UNKINDNESS 3: Fed up. Want another dodo.

JUSTINE: Then it's fated. This is my destiny. There's nothing I can do to resist it.

UNKINDNESS 1: No fate. No destiny. Probability.

JUSTINE: That doesn't make sense. How can you predict the future if you're not certain of it?

ELIZA: Real nineteenth-century girl, aren't you?

JUSTINE: What?

ELIZA: They don't have destiny where I come from. It's like spangles or something. They stopped making it years ago.

JUSTINE: But nothing's certain. That's what they're saying. I don't have a fate.

UNKINDNESS 1: You have probability. Probability's enough.

JUSTINE: I don't have to go to the homeworld. I don't have to find out what Lolita's planning.

UNKINDNESS 1: No. Don't have to go. Don't need to go.

JUSTINE: I see.

UNKINDNESS 3: But you will.

UNKINDNESS 1: Probably.

UNKINDNESS 2: Rip it. Rip open the friend-thing.

UNKINDNESS 3: Shh. Not now.

ELIZA: Justine? I really think we should go now.

Fade.

F/X: Ritual hall background.

RUTHVEN: You mean... the spirits can just appear out of nowhere? In the flesh?

LOLITA: Of course they can't appear out of nowhere. They have to have a conduit. A body to link with in the material world. That's my interpretation of Faction lore, anyway, although quite frankly most of it looks like gibberish.

GENERAL: Your meaning is unclear. Are you suggesting that an individual is to be... possessed by these beings?

LOLITA: Not possessed. I said the spirits need a conduit, not a host. Whoever does it becomes directly linked to them. Close enough to know what they know. Or to tap into their power, of course.

MORLOCK: And whom do you propose to use for this, exactly?

LOLITA: Me, obviously. You don't seriously think I'm going to give any of you the power of the spirits, do you?

MORLOCK: Then I presume you must know the ritual.

RUTHVEN: What ritual?

MORLOCK: The invocation. It's quite a complex procedure, I believe.

LOLITA: I don't need to know the ritual. I'm sure Godmother Quelch will oblige us.

QUELCH: Piss off!

LOLITA: Or else we'll start burning her relics.

QUELCH: You wouldn't dare!

LOLITA: Oh, I think we would.

QUELCH: The relics belong to the spirits! Anyone who crosses them suffers!

LOLITA: Yes, I know. And as a Godmother, you're sworn to protect the relics, aren't you? All except the weapons, which I believe are under the Godfather's supervision. So, if I've understood Faction lore properly, the spirits will hold you personally responsible if anything gets damaged. [No reply from Quelch.] Good. I see you agree. Shall we get started, then?

GENERAL: This "ritual" an unnecessary risk. My men will find the fugitive. It is only a matter of time.

MORLOCK: I rather think you're missing the point, General. I think Miss Lolita here wants to do this. It must be quite a temptation for her, to feel all that power just out of her reach. She's already communicated with them. She must know their potential.

LOLITA: What can I say? As far as the other Houses will ever know, this was done purely in the name of justice. Now, if the Godmother's ready, perhaps we could proceed with the ritual? You'll need a knife, I think.

Fade.

GRAMS: Background music.

VOICE: Reconstruction number seven. From the reports of Godfather Morlock.

MORLOCK: The results of the tests can't be argued with. We've inherited the curse of the founders. They lost their shadows when they started using the ceremonies of time, and we've got the same problem. The experiment I've been running is quite simple. In the laboratory, I set a hamster running inside its wheel, then lock the wheel inside a dynamic time loop. As a result, each turn of the wheel takes the hamster back in time to a point just before it began taking the step, using the techniques of the Grandfather and his followers. Observation shows that at around three-thousand turns of the wheel, the hamster's shadow shows serious signs of degredation. At exactly nine-thosuand-eight-hundred-and-five turns, the shadow dissiptaes altogether, leaving the hamster as one of the shadowless. Very few of our agents have taken more than a dozen or so long-range jounreys through time, of course, but let's remember that our entire Empire is sealed inside an eleven-day time-loop. The point is that each eleven-day cycle reduces us, and soon the signs will begin to show. Like the hamster in its wheel, we're damning ourselves to be among the shadowless, and therefore unarmed. [Pause.] There is a solution, however. It's theoretically possible to transplant our shadows from donors within the House, just as the founders did. Unfortunately, this would mean surgically removing the spirits of family members. This isn't something we should make public knowledge, I feel, although I'm continuing my own line of research into the matter. Until then, we just have to accept it. Our very proximity to the spirits will one day destroy us. Or, at the very least, wipe our souls clean.

F/X: Back to the ritual hall. The ceremonial whispering has begun again, as earlier. Baby gurgling on top of this.

QUELCH [under her breath, reciting without great interest]: Body to body, in constant recession. One pattern, one flesh, and our one restoration. Conception, completion, the will of the city. The Grandfather watch us. The Grandfather know us.

RUTHVEN [whispering]: Morlock? Where's that whispering coming from?

MORLOCK: Just the shadows. Nothing to worry about.

RUTHVEN: They can talk?

MORLOCK: That's nothing. They've got lovely singing voices.

LOLITA [not whispering]: Make sure your men hold Morlock nice and still, General. We don't want the Godmother losing her concentration. And do feel free to lend them a hand.

GENERAL: Was that intended to be a joke?

LOLITA: Yes. Nothing raises a smile like an amputee, does it?

QUELCH: We're ready for the marking.

RUTHVEN: Marking? What does she mean, marking?

LOLITA: She means she's going to have to write on my skin. It's the only way to keep the spirits in. Don't want any of them leaking out.

RUTHVEN: With the knife?

QUELCH: Grandfather watch us. Spirits incite us.

F/X: Stabbing sound. Blade into flesh.

LOLITA: Vicious, aren't you? I thought you just had to scratch the surface.

QUELCH: I do.

LOLITA: Well, if you must get the aggression out of your system. Go on. Write as deep as you like, you're not going to hurt me.

F/X: Squelching noises, suggesting a knife tearing flesh. Unpleasant.

RUTHVEN: She's not bleeding...

LOLITA: Of course I'm not bleeding. I didn't get where I am today by bleeding everywhere just from a little flesh wound. That's enough, Godmother. [Squelching goes on.] I said, that's enough.

QUELCH: There. You're marked. They can do what they like with you.

LOLITA: Oh, is that it? No more prayers you've got to say? No more magic spells you'd like to bore us with?

F/X: The whispering changes in pitch, as if time were slowing down. There's a deep whining sound somewhere in the distance, much like the sky-opening sound, but faint.

LOLITA: No, obviously not. Can you hear that? I think it's starting.

RUTHVEN [whispering again]: Morlock... isn't there anything we can do?

MORLOCK [whispering back]: With half a dozen Sontarans covering us? I shouldn't have thought so. Besides, the spirits are already on their way.

RUTHVEN: So it's all true? She's going to be -

MORLOCK: Omnipresent. Aware of everything that happens within the confines of the Eleven-Day Empire. It'll kill her, of course.

RUTHVEN: What?

LOLITA: I can feel it. Good grief. Are your rituals always like this?

RUTHVEN [still whispering]: Kill her?

MORLOCK: Yes. The invocation's fatal. Burns out the nervous system too fast. All to do with accelerated time perception, I should think. Must look into it one day.

RUTHVEN: Then we don't have anything to worry about. She's dead already.

MORLOCK: I said it'd kill her. I didn't say when. Unfortunately, she's probably going to have a few minutes of total awareness before she shuffles off her mortal coil. In which time...

RUTHVEN: She could kill all of us.

MORLOCK: I rather think she could do that already.

LOLITA: Yes, I could. I can hear you, you know. I can hear everything. The whole city. All those little people... all those pointless little thoughts...

RUTHVEN: This is it, isn't it? This is what you were planning all the time. You wanted the city all for yourself.

LOLITA: Wasn't it obvious? Ah.

F/X: The sound grows louder still, until it ends with a great big earth-shaking thump. The whispering stops. Silence.

RUTHVEN [after a shocked pause]: Lolita?

MORLOCK: It worked, then.

LOLITA: Oh yes. I know what you're thinking, Ruthven. At this moment, you're wondering whether the Council would listen if you sent a message to them asking for help. No, they wouldn't. And Godfather

Morlock's wondering how long it's going to be before my nervous system burns out. Isn't that right?

MORLOCK: Interesting. You're telepathic?

LOLITA: No. I just know you. I know everybody in this city. Intimately. For example, in four seconds' time Godmother Quelch is going to call me something obscene. Unless I stop her.

QUELCH: You're a -

LOLITA: Yes, I am, aren't I? Now, I didn't expect that. The girl's still here.

GENERAL: The criminal?

LOLITA: Oh, hello, General. I'd forgotten about you. I can't sense your presence at all. Must be because Sontarans are so shallow. Yes, I can track her. She's still in the city. Somewhere called... Tower Hill?

Fade.

F/X: Exterior background. Footsteps on gravel. In the distance, Big Ben chimes.

ELIZA: Well, at least the clock's still working. I would've thought they'd have bombed it out by now.

JUSTINE: The clocktower casts long shadows.

ELIZA: What's that supposed to mean?

JUSTINE: I'm not sure. Something Godfather Morlock told me. [Pause.] I apologize, Cousin. I didn't intend to involve you in this.

ELIZA: Involve me in what? Look, you're not making any sense any more. Morlock wanted us to get out of the Eleven-Day Empire, right? So why don't we go? Because this isn't what I call a good time to go through your rebellious phase.

JUSTINE [sighs]: I wish I knew by whose will this was happening. That's all. And...it's this shadow. I keep forgetting that one of my arms is there. I look down, and I expect it to be missing. It's the instincts, I think. The shadow has its own instincts.

ELIZA: And the instincts are telling you not to go back to the homeworld.

JUSTINE: Perhaps. Perhaps that's all there is too it. In which case, even my rebellion isn't by my own will.

ELIZA: We could always go back to Earth. Real Earth, I mean.

JUSTINE: No. I don't think Earth has much to offer us now.

ELIZA: We don't have to go back to our own times, though. We could go back to the age of the dinosaurs or something.

JUSTINE: Why would we wish to?

ELIZA: I don't know. It'd just be... interesting. You know. There'd be nobody else around to bother us. We could start our own Faction Paradox mission there. In the middle of the Jurassic or wherever.

JUSTINE: A mission.

ELIZA: Yeah. Why not?

JUSTINE: For prehistoric reptiles.

ELIZA: We're agents of Paradox, for God's sake. For all we know, we could be the ones who go back in time and start the human race. We could be the original Adam and Eve. Eve and Eve. Whatever.

JUSTINE: If that were true, I think we'd have been informed.

ELIZA: I'd just quite like to ride on a dinosaur. That's all. It's like... when you're at school, and they tell you that there weren't any people around when the dinosaurs were alive. You've seen all these films about cavemen and dinosaurs, and then they go and tell you it can't have happened like that. I'd like to prove them wrong. That's what I'm saying.

JUSTINE: I'm sure the elders of the Faction would admire your attitude.

ELIZA: That's why I joined up, I suppose. That was the way they pitched it to me. Proving history wrong.

JUSTINE: I'm sure there'll be time for that later. When this situation's been resolved.

ELIZA [cynical]: Yeah. When.

Fade.

F/X: Ritual hall background.

RUTHVEN: You've gone over the line now, Lolita. Your mishandling of the treaty. Your treatment of another House representative. Now this -

LOLITA: And so on and so on. You really are a bore, aren't you? All right, I think I've kept you hanging on long enough. Kine?

GENERAL: General Kine.

LOLITA: Whatever you like. Just kill him.

RUTHVEN: What? You can't -

LOLITA: No, I can't. I'm going to anyway, though. Go on, General. Get it over with.

GENERAL: No.

LOLITA: I beg your pardon?

MORLOCK: Oh dear oh dear. Revolt in the ranks.

GENERAL: None of this was part of our strategy. You are becoming unreliable.

LOLITA: So you're not going to kill Ruthven for me?

GENERAL: No.

LOLITA [sighs]: Fair enough then.

F/X: Energy blast. And a brief scream from Ruthven.

LOLITA: There. If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing yourself.

QUELCH: She just -

LOLITA: Weren't you listening? I keep trying to tell you that fifteen per cent of my body's made up of weapons systems. So, who's next?

MORLOCK: Isn't there something you're forgetting?

LOLITA: Is there? What?

GENERAL: Six of my troops are guarding this area.

MORLOCK: And, by association, six pulse rifles are currently turned in your direction.

LOLITA: Oh, that. No, I hadn't forgotten. Why?

GENERAL: You will disarm yourself. Immediately.

LOLITA: Or what? You're going to shoot me? Your old business partner?

GENERAL: Do not attempt to bait me. You are at the disadvantage now.

LOLITA: Really? Then you'd better tell your men to open fire. Go on, General. Shoot me. See how you can explain that to the Council, when they try to find out what happened here. See if they don't hunt you and your miserable Seventy-Ninth Assault Corps down to the end of time and use your battle-helmets to scoop up the mess. See what happens.

GENERAL: This is your last warning. Disarm yourself or die.

LOLITA: You don't have the nerve.

GENERAL: Disarm yourself!

LOLITA: I said, you don't have the nerve.

GENERAL: You will obey me!

LOLITA: You don't-

GENERAL: Fire!

F/X: Bursts of energy weapon fire. It last for some time. Once it's all over, everything goes quiet. There's silence in the hall, except that the baby

starts wailing.

LOLITA: Well. You did have the nerve. Pity I'm indestructable, really.

GENERAL: It's not possible...

LOLITA: I'm afraid it is. [To baby.] Shush, little thing. They're just trying to kill mummy. [To all.] High time I made my excuses, I think. Morlock?

MORLOCK: Yes?

LOLITA: Just for the record... Quelch is right. You are an arse.

F/X: Sky-opening sound, but just a small one. Followed by a stunned silence. Even the baby's gone.

QUELCH: She's gone.

MORLOCK: I think we noticed that.

QUELCH: She -

MORLOCK: I know. Immune to gunfire, and able to step out of time in the blink of an eye. Quite something.

GENERAL: Your spirits. They must be responsible.

MORLOCK: No, I don't think so. She hasn't had time to bond with them yet. Not to that degree.

GENERAL: Then how is this possible?

MORLOCK: She did tell us she was one of the newbloods. I'd love to find out how she works.

QUELCH: Don't be stupid, Morlock. Nobody can do that. Not even a newblood.

MORLOCK: Then she must be a new newblood, mustn't she? Makes you wonder what the new generation's coming to.

QUELCH: Sod her. She's gone now, that's what counts. She's not our problem any more.

MORLOCK: You don't think so? In case you hadn't noticed, she killed Ruthven. In cold blood.

QUELCH: So?

MORLOCK: She broke Council law. She took every precaution to stay within her rights, and then, at the last minute, she killed a Lord of one of the old Houses just because she felt like it. Even in a state of martial law, that's pushing things.

GENERAL: Get to the point.

MORLOCK: The point is, I can only think of one reason she'd do something like that. Because she was sure she wouldn't leave any evidence behind.

QUELCH: What, the body?

MORLOCK: The body. And all the witnesses.

QUELCH [with feeling]: Dogshite.

MORLOCK: You're the great tactician, General. What do you think she's going to do next?

Fade.

F/X: Ruthven's ship background. The door opens.

ELIZA [entering]: How do you do that, anyway?

JUSTINE: Do what?

ELIZA: Open the door. Without touching it.

JUSTINE: I don't know. It seems natural, somehow.

F/X: Sky-opening noise. Lolita arriving.

ELIZA: Christ -

LOLITA: And here was I thinking I'd never have to see you again.

JUSTINE: Miss Lolita.

ELIZA: What's she doing here?

LOLITA: I'll go wherever I like, thankyou. This is my city now.

JUSTINE: The city belongs to the Grandfather. Yours is only the right to keep order.

LOLITA: Really? You've got the mantle of the Grandfather, I'm sure you should be able to feel it.

ELIZA: What's she talking about?

JUSTINE: Oh. Oh, I can hear them, they're...

ELIZA: Justine...?

JUSTINE: The spirits. They're inside her.

LOLITA: I am this city. And its people. You should have left here, Cousin. I mean, I still would have been able to track you, but you could at least have put up a fight. For a couple of hours.

ELIZA: What's going on? What's she done?

JUSTINE: She's become one with the Eleven-Day Empire. She knows what the city knows.

ELIZA: Can she do that?

JUSTINE: Only for a short while. The experience is quite terminal, I believe. No human nervous system can survive it for long.

LOLITA: In case you hadn't noticed, I'm not human.

JUSTINE: But even a member of a House -

LOLITA: Do you really think I would have done this if I hadn't thought about the consequences? Every House is different. Or don't they teach you that? Every House builds its children in its own way. I just happen to be the only one of my kind. At least until this little bugger grows up. And believe me, when I designed myself I made damn sure I could handle a few old ghosts.

ELIZA: Designed yourself?

F/X: The communicator of Ruthven's ship activates. Standard bleepy noise.

LOLITA: Sounds like someone's trying to get in touch.

GENERAL [over comms, so tinny]: Lolita!

LOLITA: Oh, it's you.

GENERAL: You will return to the Parliament buildings. You will justify yourself before the Seventy-Ninth Sontaran Assault Corps.

LOLITA: Not now, General. I'm busy killing the runaway.

GENERAL: There is a warship already in this area. Your location is the area known as Tower Hill. If you do not return -

LOLITA: Then what? You'll blow me up? I don't think so, General. Apart from anything else, I've just put a communications block between you and your ship. So you won't be giving them any orders to open fire.

GENERAL: How is this possible?

LOLITA: Because I own this place now. The land, the air, the lot. No transmissions are going through me without my permission, so you might as well just sit tight and wait for me to finish you off. Goodbye, General.

GENERAL: We cannot allow this to -

F/X: Communicator switches off.

LOLITA: Irritating little troll. Now, where were we?

JUSTINE: I take it that this was your intention all the time, then. To become one with the spirits. To seize the power of the city.

LOLITA: Partly. And I wanted to make a point.

ELIZA: What point?

LOLITA: Oh, nothing that concerns you. Changing times on the homeworld. The newblood Houses on the rise, the old-bloods falling by the way. Political and social upheaval, the usual kind of thing.

JUSTINE: You're building a dynasty for your House.

LOLITA: A demonstration of power seemed appropriate. In years to come, I'll be remembered as the woman who brought down Faction Paradox in a single day. You've always been a thorn in the side of the other Houses, they're bound to be impressed.

ELIZA: But we're supposed to be recognized as a House now. We signed the treaty.

LOLITA: Only officially. Unofficially, the others still can't stand the sight of you.

F/X: Pitch of the ship background changes.

LOLITA [slightly rattled]: What's happening?

ELIZA: We're taking off.

LOLITA: How are we... oh, of course. You've got the Grandfather's weapons, haven't you? You can tap into the ship's systems. Steer with your shadow. Very impressive, I'm sure, but it won't help you.

JUSTINE: We have a duty to try.

LOLITA: I know you, Justine. I know the way you think. I know how you were recruited. I know your family back on Earth was led to believe you'd killed yourself. Oh, and there's that black mark on your record. Your great failure. I know all about that.

JUSTINE: My past is hardly the issue.

LOLITA: What's that supposed to mean?

JUSTINE: If you know me so well, you'll know what I'm planning. Do you?

F/X: Booming noise. As when Ruthven's ship ran into the Sontarans earlier.

LOLITA: What was that?

JUSTINE: You only have power over this city, Miss Lolita. But the Grandfather doesn't belong to the city. Quite the reverse. And the Sontarans don't belong to the city either.

LOLITA: Sontarans?

Fade.

F/X: Ritual hall echo.

GENERAL: General Kine to warship! General Kine to warship!
Respond!

QUELCH: She's cut off your communications. Weren't you listening?

MORLOCK: I don't think you're going to have to call them anyway.

GENERAL: Meaning?

MORLOCK: Listen. Can't you hear it?

F/X: We become aware of a deep rumbling; the sound of Sontaran warship engines.

GENERAL: The warship...

MORLOCK: It's moving. West to east. In the direction of Tower Hill, if I'm not mistaken.

GENERAL: I gave no orders!

MORLOCK: Somebody did. Interesting, isn't it?

Fade.

F/X: Ruthven ship background. There's the occasional booming sound, shaking the ship.

LOLITA: What's happening?

JUSTINE: You're the one who's in touch with the city. I'm sure you should be able to tell me.

LOLITA: Don't be so childish! The Sontarans don't come under the city's jurisdiction, I can't sense what they're doing.

JUSTINE: There are viewing-screens, if you'd like me to activate them. Here.

F/X: Scanner being activated. Much the same as the comms being activated, probably.

ELIZA: It's the warship. It's attacking us.

LOLITA: It can't be. Kine can't get through to his men.

JUSTINE: He didn't. I did.

LOLITA: Don't be ridiculous. You can't steer a whole Sontaran warship.

F/X: Throughout this scene, the booming gets more frequent, until it becomes an almost constant background noise.

JUSTINE: I'm afraid I can. I've spoken with the vessel before. During your raiding mission.

ELIZA: Yeah, I remember. When you told the airlock to open. You're good at that kind of thing, aren't you?

JUSTINE: I'm informed it's in my blood..

LOLITA: I don't care if you're engaged to the damned warship, there's no way -

JUSTINE: Not even for someone carrying the Grandfather's weapons? The Grandfather took all the known weapons into his shadow. Including weapons of... I believe the expression is "technological espionage". Weapons that can invade the machineries of warships. As I already have an empathy with the Sontarans' ship, it's no great matter to control it, I assure you.

ELIZA: You're doing all that? With your mind?

JUSTINE: With my instincts, perhaps.

F/X: Particularly loud bang.

LOLITA: Then tell it to stop attacking us!

JUSTINE: No.

LOLITA: You'll be killed, you stupid bitch!

JUSTINE: You already intend to kill me. It seems I have little to lose. I may as well ensure your demise at the same time.

F/X: Booms gets louder still.

LOLITA: You really think you're something special, don't you?

JUSTINE: Hardly the point, Miss Lolita. You believe me to be something special. Or else you wouldn't be here.

LOLITA [after a pause]: The city's still mine. You can't change that.

JUSTINE: As you say.

F/X: The sound of Lolita dematerializing. Baby gurgling ends.

ELIZA: Where's she gone?

JUSTINE: Excuse me a moment, Cousin. I have to stop the attack.

F/X: Booming stops.

JUSTINE: Good. It's done.

ELIZA: Oh, bloody hell. The screens. Look at the screens.

JUSTINE: Yes. That's only to be expected.

ELIZA: What's happening? What's happening to the city?

Fade.

F/X: Ritual hall echo.

QUELCH: It's all gone quiet.

GENERAL: The warship must have attacked Lolita. Our weaponry is efficient. The assault will have been brief.

MORLOCK: Kill Lolita? I don't think so. Not while she's got the spirits under her skin..

GENERAL: You led us to believe that her power would only be temporary.

MORLOCK: Yes. I did, didn't I?

GENERAL: You're not certain?

LOLITA [massive echo, accompanied by the ghost of a baby-gurgle]: Of course he's not certain.

GENERAL: Lolita!

QUELCH: Where is she?

LOLITA: Everywhere. Or hadn't you worked that out yet? The walls have ears. My ears.

GENERAL: Show yourself!

LOLITA: Why? So you can fail to kill me again? Actually, I was just dropping in to say goodbye.

MORLOCK: Oh, are you leaving?

LOLITA: No. I'm going to get rid of you, that's all.

MORLOCK: I take it you didn't dispose of Justine?

LOLITA: It doesn't matter. The Empire's still mine. For the time being, there's not a lot your brat can do. By the way, it was all your doing, wasn't it? The way she lost her shadow just before you brought out the Grandfather's knife. The way she was in the right place at the right time.

MORLOCK: You know, that sounds almost like an accusation.

LOLITA: Pretending you didn't know about the fusion bomb. Leading her straight to it.

QUELCH: Is that true?

MORLOCK: Good question.

LOLITA: You're a ruthless bastard, Morlock. I'd almost like you, if you weren't such a colossal ponce. Still. No more talk.

GENERAL: What do you intend to do?

LOLITA: I intend to be spectacular. What else? Oh, and I'm going to consume the entire city. That too.

QUELCH: Consume it?

GENERAL: Can she do this?

MORLOCK: I don't know. Nobody's bonded with the spirits for this long before. The city doesn't care whose side it's on, as long as it gets fed. Lolita's got the combined power of the spirits to call on, it's got to count for something.

QUELCH: So that's it, is it? The end of the whole sodding Empire.

MORLOCK: It's starting to look that way, I'll grant you.

QUELCH: This is all your fault, Morlock.

LOLITA: Yes, it is. Time for the coup de grace now. Goodbye, children. Everywhere.

F/X: The sky-opening noise starts again, but building slowly. This build-up of noise should have a kind of A Day in the Life feel, as it's the final big bang; a combination of all the noises we've heard so far, finally

reaching a crescendo of pure chaos. But the crescendo is still a long way off as yet.

GENERAL: Morlock?

MORLOCK: Yes?

GENERAL: Should we survive this... I wish you to know that you are no longer the enemy. The Seventy-Ninth Sontaran Assault Corps is now dedicated to the eradication of House Lolita.

MORLOCK: Thankyou, General. And I'm sorry about the arm.

GENERAL: A small matter. The honour of the Sontaran Empire is a far greater concern.

QUELCH: I wish you bastards would shut up.

F/X: Noise gets louder, loud enough to blot out all sound inside the building.

F/X: The build-up continues. Over the din, we can hear the shuffling of wings.

UNKINDNESS 2: Future coming. Empires falling.

UNKINDNESS 1: Time to leave now.

UNKINDNESS 3: Fly away. Fly away home.

F/X: The flapping of wings gets louder, the Unkindnesses taking to the air.

F/X: The same build-up of noise. Now we're hearing it from inside Ruthven's ship, so the ship background overlays it. The wailing of the baby can be heard echoing across the city. Justine and Eliza have to shout to be heard over the cacophony.

ELIZA: What is it?

JUSTINE: It's Lolita. She's swallowing everything.

ELIZA: What?

JUSTINE: She's taking it into herself. She's becoming the Eleven-Day Empire.

ELIZA: It's twisting out of shape. Everything.

JUSTINE: It's her. It's all her body. Communion with the spirits.

ELIZA: Justine -

JUSTINE: Please, Eliza. I have to concentrate. I have to tell the ship to leave.

F/X: As the cacophony grows, the sound becomes increasingly perverse. As well as a multitude of sound effects, we can hear scrambled lines of dialogue from earlier in the story, echoing in the distance.

ELIZA: Listen!

JUSTINE: Time. She's becoming local time as well as local space. She's omnipresent. There!

ELIZA: What?

JUSTINE: We're leaving. We're getting out of the Empire. Hold on!

ELIZA: Hold on to what?

JUSTINE: Hold on!

F/X: The big finish. The sound reaches its peak, a tidal-wave of noise. With a final burst, it ends, and the echo fades into silence. The last thing we hear is the baby's squealing, fading to nothing.

Fade.

GRAMS: Background music.

VOICE: Reconstruction number eight. From the lecture notes of Godfather Morlock.

MORLOCK: Truth. My students often ask me, can I discern truth from a body? It seems, they say, like a very simple task. I can cut apart the fibres of the brain, one neuron at a time. I can disassemble the human memory, piece by piece. So surely I should be able to perform a minor miracle like discerning the truth of someone's life? To cut away the candy-floss and find out what really happened? But this rather misses the point. The human brain isn't merely a tool for processing information. It's an engine designed for refining truth. All of us are connected to the web of time, at some level. By reshaping the truth in our minds, we redefine history. There is no past but the past our engines make for us. Though most of the Houses still wish to believe that there's a "right" way for history to happen, we of the Faction know better. If we seem to have a disregard for history, or for time itself, then it's only because we have a greater respect for ourselves than the rest do. We all give ourselves dignity by reinventing ourselves as better people. It's simply that some of us choose to do it more literally than others. If our rituals seem like posturing, then it's no different to what ordinary people do every day when they look at themselves in their mirrors and try to convince themselves that they're not looking any older, any weaker, or any uglier. Tomorrow we'll all be different people. Those of us who'll be here at all.

F/X: Ruthven's ship background. Peaceful. There's a long pause before anyone speaks.

ELIZA: So that was it.

JUSTINE: Yes. I suppose it was.

ELIZA: What we saw. What happened to the city.

JUSTINE: The fall of the Eleven-Day Empire. All in a day.

ELIZA: Are they... the others. Everyone. When Lolita did... whatever she did...

JUSTINE: She can track us.

ELIZA: What?

JUSTINE: Lolita can track us. Even if we're not part of the Empire now. We still leave a trail.

ELIZA: So what do we do?

JUSTINE: There's always the homeworld, of course.

ELIZA: If your shadow lets you go there.

JUSTINE: I'm afraid that's only part of the problem. The homeworld might not be as safe as Godfather Morlock believed. If Lolita's capable of swallowing our Empire -

ELIZA: Then she's capable of anything. So this is what we're up against, is it? Lolita, the homeworld, our own city, and anyone else who wants a go.

JUSTINE: We have a duty. The survival of the House rests with us.

ELIZA: Then what do we do about it? Start a mission? Only right now, that dinosaur idea's starting to look pretty bloody good. A couple of runaways in a stolen time-ship. Not a great way to start a new life, is it?

JUSTINE: There'll be others. The Faction's supposed to have missions all over the universe. If we could track them all down...

ELIZA: Then what?

JUSTINE: We'd have a sort of army, I suppose. We could try to fight back.

ELIZA: Don't think much of your tactics. Anyway, you haven't even got your armour on.

JUSTINE: Wherever we go, we can make our own designs now. The Faction's our legacy as well as our duty. Perhaps this is what the Unkindnesses were trying to tell us.

ELIZA: Should I be reassured?

JUSTINE: We've still got our weapons. We've got the mantle of the Grandfather.

ELIZA: And what does that mean?

JUSTINE [pause]: I don't know.

Fade.

GRAMS: Background music.

ELIZA: So, that was it. The fall of Faction Paradox, and all in a day. Technicolour, techniscope, and Dolby stereo where available. [Pause.] Well,

okay. Not exactly the fall of Faction Paradox. I told you right at the start, didn't I? This is Cousin Justine's story. I mean, I'm sure you've got to be wondering what happened next. Two girls together in a timeship, with all of space and time to explore, and not a care in the world apart from the fact that everyone in the universe wants to kill them. You've got to admit, there's potential there. So you're asking yourselves another one of those stupid-obvious questions. You're asking: did we do the sensible thing? Did we start raking over the rest of the universe, looking for survivors? [Pause.] Well, what do you think? Besides, that's not what you wanted to know, is it? You wanted to know about the Eleven-Day Empire. And as far as the Empire goes, this is where it all ends. But I think it's pretty clear who gets the last word here, don't you?

Fade.

VOICE: Reconstruction number nine. Address by Miss Lolita, of House Lolita, to the Council of Houses.

F/X: Baby gurgling.

LOLITA: Well. I don't think I need to explain myself much. The Eleven-Day Empire's in ruins, the Faction's powerbase no longer exists, and we've all got one less unpredictable element to worry about. I know you're probably all wondering how I did it, but as far as I know there's no clause in House law that says I've got to tell you, so I won't. They've gone, and that's that. It's a shame we had to lose Lord Ruthven in the process, although I'm sure we can learn to live without him, can't we? After all... and I wouldn't say this if a representative of House Tracolix were actually here in the Council chamber... it's not as if anyone's going to miss him much. Now, I think I've established my loyalty to House protocol. And the loyalty of my family, naturally. So let's get down to business. Shall we?

End titles.